

HB854 Statewide Housing Study

Program Fact Sheet

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Department of Social Services (VDSS)

Note: This fact sheet was created in October 2021. Program details can change regularly. For the most up-to-date information on this program and a program contact, please visit the link below:

[Link to program website](#)

01 Program goals

The purpose of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or EAP) is to assist households with low incomes, particularly those with the lowest incomes that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs.

02 Funding sources

LIHEAP is funded by annual appropriations to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

03 Governance

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has been designated to administer the Energy Assistance Program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Most determinations of eligibility will be made by the VDSS computer for all components of the EAP.

04 Population served

Grantees must target benefits to households with low incomes. They must cap EAP income-eligibility at (1) no more than the greater of 150 percent of

the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) or 60 percent of the State Median Income; and (2) no less than 110 percent of FPG. They must also give higher benefits to households with the greatest home energy need in relation to household income and number of household members. Grantees also must target benefits to households with members who are elderly, disabled, and/or a young child.

05 How program works

The EAP consists of three components: Fuel Assistance, Crisis Assistance and Cooling Assistance. The program purpose is federally-defined.

The federally defined purpose of the Fuel Assistance Component is to assist low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, which pay a high proportion of household income for home energy, primarily in meeting their immediate home energy needs. The benefit is not intended to meet the household's total home energy cost during the heating season.

The purpose of the Crisis Assistance Component is to assist households with energy related emergencies that cannot be met by Fuel Assistance or other resources.

The purpose of the Cooling Assistance Component is to assist households in acquiring or repairing cooling equipment or payment of electric bills to operate cooling equipment.

Assistance for all components will be provided through vendor payments or direct payments to eligible households. Benefits received through the EAP will not be counted as income in determining Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), public assistance, or Medicaid eligibility.

06 Program history

The Virginia Energy Assistance Program (EAP) was established in accordance with the Low-Income

Home Energy Assistance Act (LIHEAP) of 1981 (Title XXVI of Public Law 97-35) and Title III of the Human Services Amendments of 1994 (Public Law 103-252) and amendments which authorize grants to states to assist eligible households to meet the costs of home energy. The Act also established a Leveraging Incentive Program.

07 Program highlights

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains a full data warehouse on LIHEAP expenditures and households served, which can be found at the following link: [LIHEAP Data Warehouse](#)
- See Virginia's latest data profile for FY 2019 [here](#).